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HAWAII'S LAND PROBLEM

The legislature has asked the Congress to amend the land laws of the territory, and a commission of territorial law-makers is to go to Washington to push this and other measures. What they will accomplish is of course uncertain; but it is reasonably sure that they will not settle the land question in Hawaii.

The land question of Hawaii is more than simply the disposing of best advantage of the lands owned by the territory. It is true a lot of persons do think that that is all there is to be solved. But it isn't.

When every acre of public land in the Islands is in the hands of a private owner, Hawaii will still have her land question. And it may even be more vital than it seems today.

Let us look at the facts. The total amount of agricultural lands of all classes owned by the territory is today about 50,000 acres. What does this mean? Well, for one thing it means that if every acre of this land were cut up into homestead lots averaging 50 acres each, it would provide for but 1000 families, or, counting 5 to a family, would furnish homes for only some 5000 individuals. And if these families were the choicest to be found in the whole world, it could not materially change conditions in the Islands.

It were foolish to expect too much from homesteading. Indeed it seems that entirely too much stress has been laid on homesteading by nearly everyone who has attempted to wrestle with Hawaii's social and economic problems. If instead of seeking to get rid of such lands as the territory still possesses, we should abandon such an idea once and for all, we might be on the road to better results.

Of the 50,000 acres of tillable lands owned by the territory, some 30,000 acres is classed as cane lands. Now, it more than doubtful whether this cane land should ever be homesteaded, for the reason that it probably could never be made to yield its fullest return if tilled by a multitude of individual owners.

If this seems a brief in favor of our present plantation system and against the small land owner in Hawaii, it is and it isn't.

It is hard to believe that were all the sugar lands ever cut up into small holdings, the result in tons of sugar produced would be what it now is. If it would not, it would be an economic waste and therefore wrong. It remains yet to be demonstrated that growing sugar on a small farm basis can ever cope with the big unit system under scientific management. The probability that it will ever be so demonstrated seems remote. The evidence now points exactly the other way.

But this applies to only the sugar lands—to the one big, dominating, centralized and highly specialized industry of Hawaii. It does not apply to the many times larger area of other kinds of lands—lands sufficient, were they properly utilized, to sustain in comfort a population several times as large as the territory now has.

Nor does it argue in favor of a tenant and landlord system. No nation has ever reached a very high plane on such a basis. It has in fact been the cause of untold misery and injustice throughout the history of the world. To develop the highest type of citizen a man must be anchored to the soil by a home that is his very own. It is an old saying that no man will fight to defend his boarding-house, but he will fight for his home. The home is the foundation of a stable nation.

But the lands of Hawaii, whether cane lands or not, are not for sale. They are not to be had by the man who would make a home. What wonder is it that the laborers of Hawaii toil from day to day with their eyes fixed elsewhere, and dream of the day when they can go elsewhere to seek a home which they may bequeath to their children?

Now, the territory, in its 30,000 acres of cane land, does control a very significant part of the cane area of the Islands—possibly a sixth to an eighth. Why should not the territory then use this land towards upsetting the mistaken policy or habit of the sugar interests to hold or control all land, whether of cane value or not? Why should it not forget, once and for all, about homesteading these sugar lands, and instead lease, or perhaps even sell them outright to the corporations—if, as a part of the bargain an abandonment of land-hogging as a fixed corporation policy could also be included?

This might not be so difficult as it would seem. Thousands of acres of lands on every island are now held by plantation companies, that pay little if any adequate return, but which would make homes of greater or less desirability for thousands of people. Such lands should not be given away, but should be made available to those who wished to buy at a fair valuation. They should go to furnish homes, or the possibility of homes, for the workers of the Islands; and should be looked upon by the present owners as an investment towards the future labor supply of the territory.

This plan would mean the recognition of the plantation system as developed in Hawaii as a sound economic development. It would divorce sugar from a multitude of minor and not especially profitable pursuits. It would furnish room for a real population to develop—a population having a deeper interest in Hawaii than a meal-ticket. And it should go far to permanently solving the never yet solved labor problem.

TAKING STOCK OF RESULTS

The question of whether or not the late legislature was the "worst ever," as Speaker Holstein has declared, is now largely an academic one. It makes little difference now whether it was or not. Nor could a decision on the matter alter the fact that the Tenth Legislature did enact some good legislation and did kill some that would have been decidedly bad.

And it did this, moreover under the handicap of a lot of political and demagogic wire-pulling that was the real cause of the burden of reproach which has been heaped upon the body.

A lot of credit for the good results accomplished belongs to a few strong men in both houses. It was their work and watchfulness that in the main outweighed the skilled demagoguery of Lorrin Andrews and the drag of sluggish mentality on part of a considerable proportion of the members of the lower chamber. To them is due the credit for the blue sky law, the farm loan act, the purchase of the Irwin estate, increase in teachers' pay, the fish hatchery bill—all measures which, if not all that could be desired, are aimed in the right direction.

Nor should they be denied credit for killing the vicious amendment to the workman's compensation law, proposed and cunningly fought for by Andrews—a measure that would have hamstringed one of the best laws enacted in the territory in recent years.

Naturally there is much to be desired in the record, and the failure of the foreign language school's bill, of woman suffrage, of reapportionment, and some others don't leave a good taste. But now that it is over it is but proper that we should take such satisfaction as we may from what we really did (and did not) get, and like Polly Anna, be glad it wasn't a whole lot worse.

Levi Joseph has withdrawn from the race for supervisor on account of the Attorney-General's opinion that a member of the legislature is ineligible to hold another office. This is to be regretted. It would have been extremely interesting to see how Maui voters would look upon a candidate who had voted against woman suffrage and had also violated a party pledge in doing so.

WHEN WILSON LOST THE LEAD

It begins to look as though the peculiar brand of egotism that prompts Woodrow Wilson to always play a lone hand, had finally tripped him up. It may be that in this weakness he found his fatal vulnerability.

Unless there are a lot of modifying details which have yet not come through to these Islands it is hard to see how the people of the United States are to bear with equanimity our apparent abandonment of perhaps the dearest principle of the American people—that of the rights of small and weak nations.

Perhaps we haven't abandoned this principle, but how else are we to interpret the giving of Fiume to the Italians or the Shantung province of China to Japan? It certainly looks as though we had surrendered, and that without a struggle.

The galling thing about it is the feeling that we have been—and still are—kept in the dark both as to motives and results. And the humiliating suspicion now intrudes that Wilson has pitted himself against men shrewder than he in the game of diplomacy and has lost.

When Wilson abandoned, as he most assuredly did abandon, the very first one of his own famous "Fourteen Points," he lost his first and strongest card. This point declared for—"Open covenants, openly arrived at, after which there shall be no private international understandings of any kind, but diplomacy shall proceed always frankly and in the public view."

There has been none of this since the very first sessions of the "council of four," behind closed doors, began to gamble with the destinies of the world.

An absolute censorship on correspondents in Paris has kept the world in the dark by preventing any stray items of news being sent out. Correspondents and the press have been reduced to the plane of a mere propaganda machine—not to disseminate NEWS, but to mould public sentiment. We have been fed half-truths, and then always with an object in view.

The pity of it all is that America was in a position to virtually enforce her principles of the league of nations. She had no ax to grind when she demanded the right of self-determination for small peoples. And all of the other powers did have. There was nothing selfish in her attitude. She had proposed something, in a league designed to make war impossible, that touched the greatest need of every nation in Europe. Left to themselves they could not hope to realize it. With the United States backing it, they could.

The United States could best of all afford to hold aloof. Her isolation, her resources, and her physical greatness make her immune from the nightmare of sudden annihilation under which every European nation must henceforth labor. And last and perhaps most potent of all, we hold for the present the commercial and financial supremacy of the world, and in no small sense may dictate through that power.

We were in a magnificent position to enforce altruistic doctrines upon the world and demand that they be given a fair try out. But we have lost our opportunity. We have allowed ourselves to be entangled in a maze of intricate, old world diplomacy and intrigue. We permitted ourselves to be inveigled into playing the other fellows' game instead of insisting upon our own—as we could have done, and made it stick. We have played the part of Mr. Easy-Mark, in Europe's confidence game.

Had Wilson from the start played with his cards upon the table, with all America—yes, with all Europe—lined up behind him, he would have won hands down. He held the trumps and did not need to play the game. But he chose to play against his vest. And when he discarded his first point, "open covenants, openly arrived at," he played into his opponents' hands and filled from a cold deck.

America still holds a strong position but she has sacrificed some principles that must continue to lay our professed motives open to suspicion or to contempt.

A MATTER OF COMMUNITY PRIDE

It has come to be considered a matter of course that Maui should accomplish whatever task she undertakes. But in reaching the goal in the Victory Loan, perhaps ahead of any other part of the territory, she has particular cause for pride. Oahu was still \$300,000 below her quota last night, notwithstanding some \$60,000 given her by Maui and other sums received from both Kauai and Hawaii. It is expected she will make the summit today, however, and this will be cause for general congratulation.

The Islands' record stands out far and away ahead of the United States as a whole, which up to last night had raised only a little over three-fifths of the four and a half billion total. Whether the nation will be able to make the top is now open to serious question; but that Hawaii has done so, is all the more to her credit under the circumstances.

POLITICS AND ILLICIT BOOZE

It is against the law to give a drink of liquor to another. A good many persons do not seem to know this. But the law makes it as much a crime to give away intoxicants as to make or to sell them. And it is also against the law simply to carry liquor from one place to another.

It may not be amiss just at this time, to call the attention of certain politicians to these facts. Unless rumors are without any foundation whatever, at least one or two of the professional workers in the local field, who have heretofore considered it a matter of duty to see that the faithful voter was rewarded with at least a drink or two of "square-face," have been contemplating a little kolehau or swipes this year as a substitute. The police no doubt have a pretty good hunch as to the probable truth of such rumors and will not be blind as election day draws near.

SAFETY FIRST

The public utilities board, following an accident through which three persons were electrocuted in Honolulu recently, has issued an order requiring the Honolulu electric company to "ground" all of its service transformers. This, experts claim, will reduce to a minimum the possibility of a repetition of such tragedy.

It may be that Maui's electric service systems are all that they should be in point of safety, but it would not seem unreasonable that the utilities board should satisfy itself on this point, and at the same time reassure the public. From past experience Wailuku at least, has little reason to take anything for granted in connection with its electric service.

TIME TO GET BUSY

Now that the legislature has given Maui \$10,000 for a permanent territorial building for the Maui county fair, the way is made clear for the realization of the plans of the Maui County Fair & Racing Association in ample measure. And it is high time to get busy. A loan of \$10,000 has also been promised the association, and it ought not to be very hard to raise the other \$5000 which it is estimated will be needed to put the Kahului grounds in shape. But if we are to have the fair next fall that we have planned there is no time to dream over the job.

Kauai claims to have been the first county in the territory to "go over the top" in the Victory Loan, having reached her quota of \$228,000 on Wednesday of last week. Perhaps she did—technically. But Maui had her \$380,000 by Wednesday morning, only the local management was so afraid of checking the golden flood that they refused to announce the figures. Maui's pretty hard to beat.

The big Territorial Fair in Honolulu is less than a month off and it is not too soon for Maui people to be making up their minds about going. It is safe to say that no one can attend such a fair without being benefitted directly or indirectly. Make up your mind now to go—and don't change it.

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